

1980

Paintings and drawings

Anita M. Jones
Portland State University

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: http://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/open_access_etds



Part of the [Art Practice Commons](#), and the [Painting Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Jones, Anita M., "Paintings and drawings" (1980). *Dissertations and Theses*. Paper 3499.

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. For more information, please contact pdxscholar@pdx.edu.

PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS

by

Anita M. Jones

**A Thesis Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of**

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

in

PAINTING

Portland State University

1980

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE:

The Members of the Thesis Committee Approve the
Thesis and Report of Anita M. Jones presented May 19, 1980

[REDACTED]
Fred Heidel, Chairman

[REDACTED]
Craig Cheshire

[REDACTED]
Claudine Fisher

[REDACTED]
Richard Muller

[REDACTED]
Laura Paul

Approved:

[REDACTED]
Leonard Kimbrell, Head, Department of Art and Architecture

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	iv
---------------------------	----

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE BEGINNING.	2
III. THE WORK	6
IV. ABOUT LEMON-LIMES.	57

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
I "Window II"	7
II "Balcony"	8
III "Escape"	10
IV "Floral"	11
V "Linda"	12
VI "Self Portrait"	14
VII "Deshabille"	15
VIII "Girl With A Cup"	16
IX "Janie"	18
X "Reflection"	19
XI "Invitation"	20
XII "Girl On A Ladder"	21
XIII "Thistle Obscurity"	24
XIV "Applique"	25
XV "Sunflowers"	26
XVI "Profusion"	27
XVII "Seven Rose Night"	29
XVIII "Two Contained"	30
XIX "A Reference To Black Eyed Susans"	31
XX "Field Reference"	32
XXI "Winter Window"	34
XXII "Summer Window"	35
XXIII "Poplar"	36

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
XXIV "Marigolds"	37
XXV "Lily Too"	38
XXVI "Solitude"	39
XXVII "Oregon Sunflower"	40
XXVIII "Black Eyed Susans"	41
XXIX "Harbinger"	42
XXX "Full House"	43
XXXI "Reverie"	44
XXXII "Female Image"	45
XXXIII "Bather"	46
XXXIV "Colleen"	47
XXXV "Stars Get In Your Eyes"	48
XXXVI "Je Pense"	49
XXXVII "Trio"	51
XXXVIII "Floral Suggestion"	52
XXXIX "Lily Won"	53
XL "Sentimental Rose"	54
XLI "Poplar Suggestion"	55
XLII "Rose Selavy"	56

INTRODUCTION

My first inclination was to write about these works in terms of the formal aspects and exclude the intuitive element. After further consideration I decided that I was not willing to present my work as if the formal aspects were all it had to offer. The appeal of a work of art does not lie alone in those aspects. Therefore, in the following pages I will discuss the technical, formal, intuitive and personal elements of my work. The paintings are a correlation of these.

THE BEGINNING

I began with a proposal which left the question of subject matter in my work open but focused attention on interruption of light. I spent the summer between my first and second year of graduate school with my camera, searching for examples where light interruption was both evident and interesting to me. I photographed subjects which had certain elements in common, objects that cast shadows and those that made linear patterns. I am intrigued by patterns, whether natural or technologically-induced, and those created by harsh lighting. These were the starting point of a number of my works. Because I work from my own photographs the composition is mine, though color and shapes may be altered as the painting progresses. The first group of paintings and many of the drawings under discussion are the result of this procedure.

Although I found working from my own photo-compositions and choice of subject matter compelling, I was also drawn to work more intuitively. Specifically this entailed the use of an informal grid-system in landscape which also incorporated my interest in line and pattern. I took a series of photographs in which the verticality of the repeated plant shapes were seen in opposition to the horizon. These photographs included poplar trees, sunflowers, roses, black-eyed susans, and an assortment of other flora. The plants create a vertical pattern that exists in tension with the horizontal color pattern. The second group of paintings and later drawings deal with this concept and are an outgrowth of my original idea. There are advantages to be gained by working from the general to the specific

and inversely having something specific to begin with that is preconceived. I explored the possibilities of both processes and am increasingly aware of what each has to offer.

Like most painters I have been influenced by many sources; nature, the art of contemporaries, the art of the past. Perhaps the most difficult part of becoming an artist is deciding what ingredients, and in what combination, will result in art. I believe that both my light interruptor paintings and the grid landscapes are based upon contradictions. To know one thing one must be aware of its opposite. Working on the background creates the object in the foreground. To make light areas one needs dark. To emphasize blue one may contrast it with orange. The object is to correlate the opposites so that they enhance each other. This struggle has come down through the ages, the first example being the male-female, yang-yin relationship. Other examples of these polarities are found in unemotional-emotional, logical-intuitive, left brain-right brain, geometric-biomorphic, "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance" classic-romantic, and underlying form versus immediate appearance. Constant play on internal contrast is an important aspect of my painting.

My original plan was to entitle my paper "Formal Adaptations", my project being centered on the exploration of the relationships between perceptual stimuli (photographs), and subsequent formal adaptations with emphasis on light and pattern elements in painting. I try to balance the conceptual and perceptual in my work. Though my format is logical and classic, my approach is intuitive, emotional and romantic. When I begin to paint the right brain takes over and time passes quickly. I become aware of thoughts again when I put

down my brush and have stepped back to survey the results. Painting for me is a result of this process, a mixture of the intuitive and the logical.

I could never be satisfied with a painting in which everything is in its place looking slick and totally intellectualized. I find certain ceramics interesting because the ceramist does not have total control over what is going to happen in the kiln. Painting for me is like that, controlled yet uncontrolled. Something takes over, whether it be called intuition or emotion and the result has a quality of freshness that must mesh with the intellectual elements. The painting is an outcome of this union. If the balance is too great the painting is dead, if too little, chaotic.

Color is a vital element in my work. As part of the painting it involves both the thinking and feeling parts of me. Every art student is introduced to various color theories. The colors I choose are a combination of my knowledge of how colors react upon each other as well as how I react to them. Color as structure in combination with the value changes and color as expression are both essential issues. The majority of these works are dominated by intense color. This is a reaction to my self-imposed use of subdued colors for several years, color then being subordinate to surface. At this time I already feel myself swinging back toward using more subtle tones, a combination of the subdued and the intense, another polarity.

An important aspect of my work, perhaps the only one which is totally intuitive, is the surface quality of the piece. To me the ultimate result must look fresh and unfailingly enthusiastic. It is the exciting build-up of surface tensions and the intuitive

application of thick paint that holds my interest. The romantic in me is most interested in painting. It is that part of me that is fascinated by the appearance and the tactile quality of the paint. Brushwork may not be the leading lady but she deserves an Oscar for supporting actress.

"Window II" (Fig. I) is the sole survivor of a series of drawings and several paintings I did dealing with fenestration. The divided window was of interest because the slats were obvious light interruptors that threw a simple pattern onto the floor. This allowed me to involve myself in the surface and color possibilities of the painting. I began this painting in the spring of 1979 and finished it in the winter of 1980. It was repainted several times due to my changing interest in color possibilities. I am intrigued by color combinations that lend themselves to an increase in the visual impact of the painting. I often find myself repainting a piece, changing colors but retaining shapes, while continuing to build up the desired surface.

Another painting that underwent this process was "Balcony" (Fig. 2). This painting was inspired by an old black and white photograph which showed two children standing on the balcony. The inclusion of the figures in this case became an encumbrance rather than an asset so I eliminated them. I finished the painting for the first time in earth tones. Because of my growing interest in intense color I eventually became dissatisfied with the piece and repainted it. The rear railing in this painting is an example of my interest in the relationship between positive and negative space. Working around forms and intensifying the interplay between those forms that are supposedly positive and those that are negative is an important aspect of my work. Both of these paintings contain intense color and both reflect my interest in linear elements.



FIGURE I
Window II

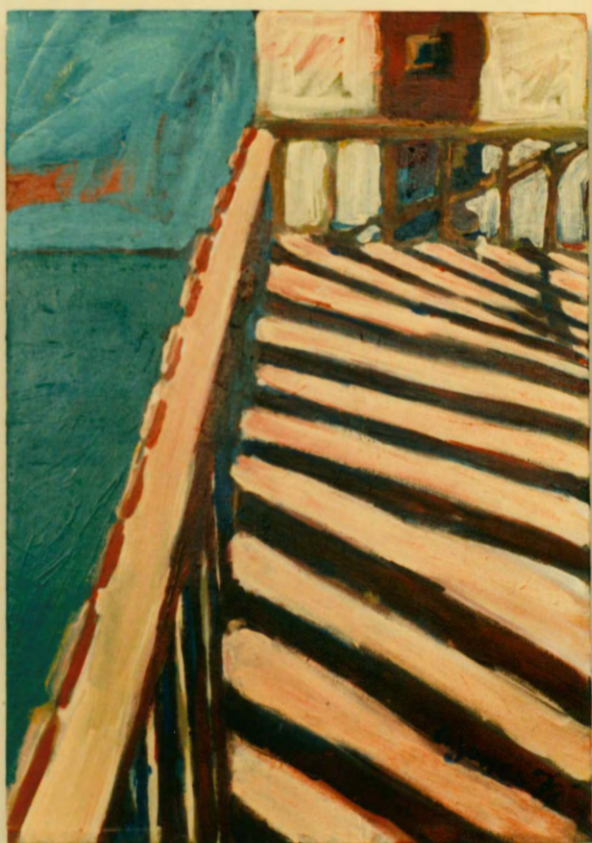


FIGURE II

Balcony

Two paintings that I will discuss together because in each the dominant image is a single object, are "Escape" (Fig. 3) and "Floral" (Fig. 4). I did a series of pool and still-life photographs and these paintings are based on them. "Escape" is a straight forward depiction of a pool and patio area with an impressionistic look to the vegetation. What I feel to be important in this work is again the interplay of the fence with the vegetation shapes which seem to override it in areas. This meshing of forms creates an area of spacial ambiguity. How far can one push this element? Is one form more important? Are they mutually supportive? There are always more questions. With each painting I was being led in new directions. "Floral" is a still-life and like "Window II" presents a situation in which light comes into an interior space. The table is tilted toward the viewer. The back wall is simplified and the various shapes are dealt with as flat areas of heavy pigment. These areas were scratched through while the paint was wet. This intensified the surface quality and created a color tension between the hue below and the most recently applied pigment. While working with the flowers and flower shadows I again realized my interest in the object and its relation to the surrounding shape. The verticality of the flowers is in contrast to the strong horizontal element in this composition. This is the most symmetrical and classic of my compositions. In others I lean heavily toward the romantic, dramatic and the Baroque.

Six of my paintings deal with the figure. That single figure is the object that catches the light and becomes the subject matter. "Linda" (Fig. 5) is a painting I "finished" several times before it reached its current state. The shape of the girl is nearly identical to the remaining negative space. I tried to make both shapes work



FIGURE III

Escape



FIGURE IV

Floral



FIGURE V

Linda

together, each mutually supportive. The girl is obviously the subject but I did not want the rest of the area to be just "left over." I increased its visual impact by overpainting and texture.

"Self Portrait" (Fig. 6) is quite different as it is the only piece in which I intentionally dealt with a specific person with a portrait intention. For that reason it could be one of the most repainted of my works, primarily due to an emotional reaction to the changing color rather than to the form. The bright red hair is a reaction to the countless times that I have been told that my hair is red when I am quite aware that it is auburn. Choice of color can be a very emotional decision. I once had a yellow green in the background, green being a color I have always related to myself because of my eyes, but it too fell by the wayside. I was using it as a symbol as I did in the use of the red.

"Deshabille" (Fig. 7) contains a conglomeration of problems. It deals with a figure in landscape but also involves interior and exterior space. The title was suggested by the brushwork and to an extent by the expression on the face. I was overcome by the desire to write on the canvas, as I do in my drawings, which exhibits a more casual attitude toward the piece. Although this painting has been reworked many times in my eyes it still retains the look of a study.

"Girl With A Cup" (Fig. 8) is one of my later paintings, started later than many others but finished sooner. It is one of the few pieces that does not have multiple layers of paint. The figure and its shadow are laid out against a strong, repetitive horizontal which creates a linear rhythm in the wall behind and on the floor. The lines of the vines are sharply in contrast, much less formal and



FIGURE VI

Self Portrait

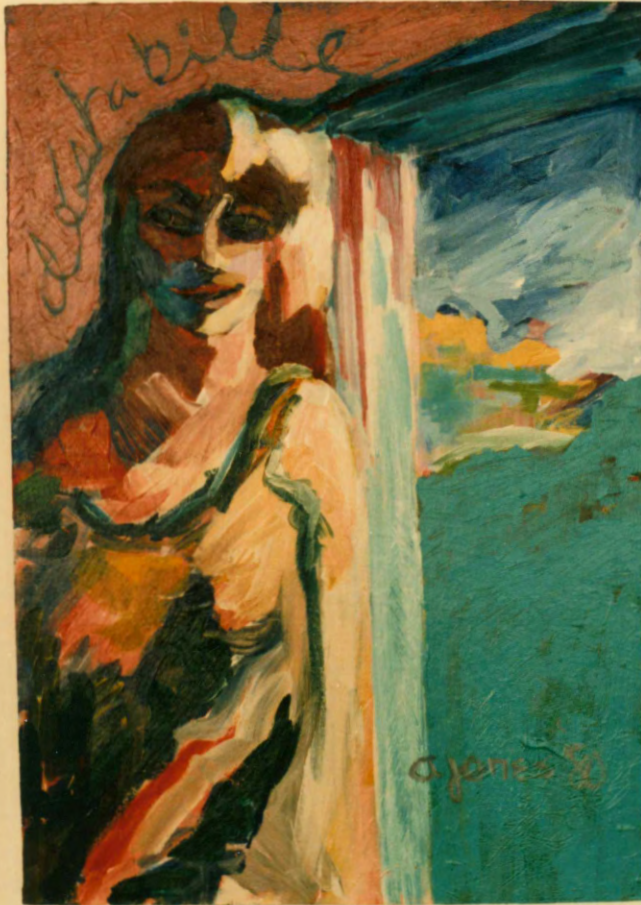


FIGURE VII

Deshabille



FIGURE VIII

Girl With A Cup

seemingly accidental. Although I do not begin thinking in terms of mood, the introduction of the figure is an overpowering element that tends to dominate the space. This is a strong force that may obscure the formality of a work. The underplaying of the formal aspect is made up for in emotional impact, the viewer having an immediate identification with the piece. My interest in painting around the object or form is very evident in this work, especially in the light-shadow area of the floor.

"Janie" (Fig. 9) is the result of a momentary interest in the flatness I found in the work of Matisse, when I wrote a research paper on that artist. This painting, in its flatness, is different from all the rest. Yet the interest in light, color and the shapes around the subject are still present. Line was not excluded and can be seen in the texture on the swimming suit. Like "Floral" and "Window II" the forms in this piece were simplified and again this led to further experimentation with color coordination.

"Reflection" (Fig. 10) deserves mention because it incorporates the figure, the grid, and the window within one painting. I again experimented with the surface and the color. Color complements are used in the grid of the window. Unlike many of the pieces, here the grid remains sacrosanct and is not encroached upon by the surrounding shape. This, as well as the figure, encourages the illusion of three dimensions. Foreground and background do not interlock as they do in many of the works, but remain separated by the figure.

The last two paintings dealing with light interruption are "Invitation" (Fig. 11) and "Girl On A Ladder" (Fig. 12). These two pieces have much in common, the most overriding being the havoc and



FIGURE IX

Janie



FIGURE X

Reflection



FIGURE XI

Invitation



FIGURE XII

Girl On A Ladder

consternation they caused in my life. Both were begun in the summer of 1979 and swing full circle in the quality and tone of the color in the process of the painting. They have been worked over a great deal with the color organization and impact changing continually. Because of the lengthy work done on them these paintings may end up with more of the subduing qualities of color that are becoming more apparent in my work as each day passes. In terms of paint application and method, these are pivotal works. A wash or glaze was used in them which introduced a new quality to the surface to be further explored in the paintings that follow.

My second group of works deals with landscapes developed within an informal grid-system. The grid is comprised of vertical vegetative forms in contrast with the horizontal of the earth. The horizontal-vertical polarity is found in the art of many cultures and ages. Its apparent allure is no less compelling in modern times. My continued attention to this compositional process developed from my former interest with the grid of the windows and the linear patterns found throughout my light interruption pieces. Within this pictorial structure I chose to work with plant forms. People do not have as many preconceived ideas about the structure of plants as they have about the structure of the figure. This allowed me to deal with less specific shapes and leave room for more intuitive paint application. The painting surface is allowed to be more itself and less of a depiction.

Spacial tension has become even more pronounced in the second group. Interest in the relationship between foreground forms and background shapes is intensified. Competition between these areas

became obvious and I found myself wanting both sides to win. The space between the objects must work as color intervals somewhat like rests in a musical composition. The vertical forms set the rhythmic pattern. I wanted the background to be as intense and demanding as the foreground. My first experimentation with this idea was realized in "Thistle Obscurity" (Fig. 13). The surface was built up with heavy pigment and then washed over with phthalocyanine blue and worked into with yellow and rose red. The result after repeated applications was a rich "stained glass" effect. The foreground is in an emerging and retreating interchange with the background. The surface became much stronger than the original forms.

Again employing the vertical-horizontal format and beginning to become aware of its possibilities, I began working on several new pieces. The first of these is "Applique" (Fig. 14). I worked with heavy paint application and wash but I took it a step further and worked into the canvas again with opaque pigment. This piece did not come together so quickly though I had done a smaller study which I thought to be quite successful. I worked on it many times with wash and heavier pigment and the impasto won out in terms of coverage. The finished painting has a cigarette commercial quality that underplays reality and promotes fantasy. I would not recommend it as a steady diet but it may be palatable as an occasional dessert.

Two paintings which were produced with a similar process are "Sunflowers" (Fig. 15) and "Profusion" (Fig. 16). Though they have an obvious difference in terms of scale, my approach was the same in that it fell between the two painting processes formerly mentioned. The result leaves the wash in evidence. In contrast with the wash are



FIGURE XIII

Thistle Obscurity



FIGURE XIV

Applique



FIGURE XV

Sunflowers



FIGURE XVI

Profusion

areas of opaque pigment. I enjoy the resulting effect of the opaque surface over the heavily textured and washed surface. I also try to leave a record of my progress in the painting by leaving some of the washed, built up area around the vegetative forms showing. The painting carries within itself the key to its development.

I stretched four small canvasses and continued my exploration. "Seven Rose Night" (Fig. 17) and "Two Contained" (Fig. 18) were treated in a similar process but with more subdued color. The areas around the flower shapes are treated with careful attention to their individuality yet they still work as a horizontal color band which enhances the subject's verticality. In "A Reference to Black Eyed Susans" (Fig. 19) and "Field Reference" (Fig. 20) I minimized the contention between the horizontal and the vertical through subdued colors and little change in value. Though the horizontal bands of color are still present their impact is subdued and softened. The surface quality in these works becomes the strong element as it did in "Thistle Obscurity".

Because of my interest in the informality of approach and because paper stacks more compactly than stretched canvas, I began to experiment on three-ply bristol board with acrylic paint. The thickness of the paper seemed adequate to handle the pigment, so I continued exploring the possibilities of heavy opacity and its relationship to wash. My format is the vertical rectangle twenty-two by thirty inches. The drawing forms its own edge with the remaining white of the paper representing the mat. Though I use wash frequently, I have been careful not to let it become an easy solution or simply a transparent screen, used indiscriminately to minimize discrepancies.



FIGURE XVII

Seven Rose Night



FIGURE XVIII

Two Contained



FIGURE XIX

A Reference To Black Eyed Susans



FIGURE XX
Field Reference

I thoroughly enjoy the use of paint on paper because it makes it easier to disregard the sense of preciousness an artist can get toward his work. It allows for a freshness and forthrightness that did not have to be learned as did my approach to reworking a painting on canvas.

The subject of these works falls into both the categories of light interruption and grid landscape. As I was working on my landscapes, the aperture, or window idea wheedled its way into my consciousness. The relationship of the grid of the window to my informal landscape grids was inescapable. It seems that I had come full circle.

I find the use of pastels and oil pastels intriguing because they combine both drawing and painting qualities at once. Both media involve color as does paint, but also possess the qualities of a drawing tool. The linear aspect of the pastel can be smoothed away or blended. The oil pastel, through heavy application, has many painterly possibilities and can be worked with turpentine if so desired. Both media encourage a sensuousness of surface and the option of layering.

Ink on paper deals with black, white and many intervening gradients. Because this immediately creates the illusion of a lighting situation and a tension between the lights and darks, I felt that the inclusion of some of these works was important. Dealing strictly with value is a less complex problem than dealing with all of the factors of color simultaneously. One does not have as many alternatives yet the visual impact is often stronger. Since I have been dealing with polarities, I feel that the inclusion of



FIGURE XXII

Summer Window



FIGURE XXIII

Poplar



FIGURE XXIV

Marigolds



FIGURE XXV

Lily Too



FIGURE XXVI

Solitude



FIGURE XXVII
Oregon Sunflower



FIGURE XXVIII

Black Eyed Susans



FIGURE XXIX

Harbinger



FIGURE XXX

Full House



FIGURE XXXI

Reverie



FIGURE XXXII

Female Image



FIGURE XXXIII

Bather



FIGURE XXXIV

Colleen



FIGURE XXXV

Stars Get In Your Eyes



FIGURE XXXVI

Je Pense

black and white studies in my exhibition is a necessity.

Watercolor involves a totally new set of rules. The layering of color becomes a vital issue because of the transparency of the medium. This transparent quality is especially interesting because it enables the artist to produce a complex surface with fewer steps. Careful application of the strokes is essential if one wants the work to retain a sense of freshness and remain uncontrived. In some works I found the use of sumi brush helpful because of its facility for making unselfconscious shapes. It was especially helpful in the more intuitive grid landscapes that did not rely on photographs.



FIGURE XXXVII

Trio



FIGURE XXXVIII

Floral Suggestion



FIGURE XXXIX

Lily Won



FIGURE XL

Sentimental Rose



FIGURE XLI
Poplar Suggestion



FIGURE XLII

Rose Selavy

About Lemon-limes

we are inventing lemon-limes here
there are only two rules
first always draw from your other essence
second don't try to mean anything

if you think you mean it
don't say it say something else
almost anything will do
then step back and look

when you like what you see
believe it it has become true
somehow it works that way
you have invented lemon-limes

don't say: LOOK! LEMON-LIMES!
because everyone will see something
different or nothing at all
they will think you're a crazy bastard

we're not here to classify
or find a common denominator
we're here to invent things with/for
our other eye ear tongue emotion

see you peel away the outside
and you find this strange new fruit
inside it comes apart in sections
like this and this and this

Bob Jones